

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

MOTOR VESSEL KITION

ALLISION WITH I-10 BRIDGE,

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA,

FEBRUARY 10, 2007

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Docket No.: DCA07FM013

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Interview of: RODDY LACOUR

U.S. Coast Guard
Marine Safety Unit
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Monday,
February 12, 2007

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
notice, at 2:45 p.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE

APPEARANCES:

LIAM LARUE
National Transportation Safety Board

BILL WOODY
National Transportation Safety Board

CHIEF RAY BALL
U.S. Coast Guard

PETTY OFFICER ROBERT FEUS
U.S. Coast Guard

MICHAEL F. VITT, ESQ.
General Counsel
E.N. Bisso & Sons, Inc.

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:45 p.m.)

MR. LARUE: All right, it is Monday, February 12th, about 2:45 p.m. This is Liam Larue from NTSB. I want to introduce ourselves for the record.

MR. WOODY: Bill WOODY, NTSB.

PETTY OFFICER FEUS: Petty Officer Robert FEUS, U.S. Coast Guard.

CHIEF BALL: Chief Ray Ball, U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. VITT: Michael F. Vitt, General Counsel for E.N. Bisso and Son.

CAPTAIN LACOUR: Roddy Lacour, Captain of the Peggy H.

MR. LARUE: Could you spell your last name for the record, please, sir?

MR. LACOUR: L-A-C-O-U-R.

MR. LARUE: All right. Thank you very much.

INTERVIEW OF RODDY LACOUR

BY MR. LARUE:

Q. Could we start off here, with can I get your age please, captain?

A. 46.

Q. Okay. If you could, just go into your maritime background for me, please. Start off with how long you've had a license, what license you hold, what companies you've worked

1 for.

2 A. I have worked for E.N. Bisso since like '78, '79.
3 That's the only company I've ever worked for. I'm on a seven
4 on, seven off shift. I think my first, as soon as I got my
5 license in '81 or '82, I got on a boat and I've been on a boat
6 ever since 1981 or '82, I'm not really sure which.

7 Second class, I got a second class license when I was
8 20. When I turned 21 it became first class, inland and western
9 rivers, but then later it turned to master of towing.

10 Q. Do you know when did you get the master of towing?

11 A. Well, I've always had the same license. It just
12 became a master of towing when I --

13 Q. I got you. Okay.

14 MR. VITT: For the record, what he's speaking about
15 is operator of uninspected towing vessels, second class
16 license, which then became, at age 21, became a first class
17 operator of towing vessels, today's equivalent to the master of
18 towing vessels.

19 MR. LARUE: Okay.

20 BY MR. LARUE:

21 Q. And you've worked for E.N. Bisso since, for the whole
22 time?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. On the day of the accident, what vessel were
25 you on?

1 A. Peggy H.

2 Q. And you were serving in what capacity?

3 A. As captain.

4 Q. Okay. And were there other people onboard with you?

5 A. Yes. I had two deck hands and an engineer.

6 Q. All right. Let's see. Can you just go back to that
7 day and start with maybe when you got the call, when you found
8 out you were going to be working at Apex and just go through
9 the whole accident, as best you can remember, anything you can
10 think of.

11 A. Okay. We usually are given the orders three hours in
12 advance. I think we got those orders, I want to say it was,
13 0500 or 0600. I don't remember exactly. But either way, we
14 went to the ship. We left about say 5:45. I'm going to say it
15 was ordered for 6:00. It may have been 5:00 because it was
16 delayed. But either way, we were along side the ship 15
17 minutes before its ordered time and basically, we waited until
18 the start time. This time would be on my log, if I had it. I
19 don't have it. On the log, I can give you the exact times as
20 to what happened, on those logs.

21 That will make it a lot easier. Okay. The job was
22 ordered for 6:00. We left at about 5:00. A quarter of a mile
23 above the bridge, we tied up on the west bank moor. We got
24 along side the ship at 0545 and the first order was given at
25 0705. They were starting letting go lines. And I don't

1 remember exactly what the first command was. It was probably
2 forward straight in, or something like that, to hold the ship
3 along side the dock. And they let all the lines go.

4 And when they got on the bow, that's cables with rope
5 tenants roped ends (indiscernible) is what it's called. And
6 they let everything go and they were taking up, I think the
7 inboard line first and the outboard line, we were way up on the
8 bow. The outboard line came down and I told the pilot we had
9 to slide back a little bit, just to make sure we didn't get in
10 any trouble, get it in the wheel or anything like that. It was
11 really no danger, but I wanted to tell him.

12 And I kept coming ahead. I believe I just backed on
13 the inside engine and then slid back and kept pushing. We were
14 still along side the dock and we had cleared the line and
15 everything. It was quite a few feet in front of us. There was
16 no danger. It was straight up and down. Sometimes when
17 they're picking it up, the weight like lessens, needless to say
18 and they kind of might pick it up. We've never gotten a line
19 in a wheel like that and I wanted to make sure we just slid
20 back a little bit. At this time, the ship was still along side
21 the dock.

22 They took all the lines in and I believe my first
23 command was go back half. And we started backing half and the
24 ship came away from the dock somewhat. And I think probably
25 about then, he told the stern to Gladys B. and the Margaret F.

1 Cooper to drop back to the stern. And in order to get, I
2 really couldn't say exactly when or at what point he told them
3 to push hard, but my next command was back hard and we started
4 turning to starboard.

5 And we were above the bridge, pretty much abreast at
6 Apex, maybe even with the dock. I mean, the ship was still
7 overlapping the dock. It might have fallen back a little bit,
8 but all this time, the ship was above the bridge. We started
9 our turn to starboard. We went backing full on both engines
10 and we kept turning.

11 And based on a 7:40 impact time, that was my time,
12 okay? It could have been 15 minutes more or less. That was my
13 time. I'm basing all the times on the impact time. I don't
14 know, it could have been ten minutes more or less. Okay.
15 Based on 7:40 at the actual impact time, about three minutes,
16 maybe two and a half minutes before impact, I told, I had one
17 deck hand was awake and in the wheelhouse with me and all his
18 gear. The other deck hand and engineer was sleeping.

19 About maybe two minutes before the impact, I told the
20 deck hand to go out in front of the wheelhouse and prepare to
21 let go of the line. But just in case, it didn't look like we
22 were going to hit the bridge, I rang the general alarm and I
23 told him to let go of the line as soon as he got slack in it.
24 And I was backing hard. About the same time I was pulling the
25 engines out of gear, I had to stop and come full ahead to put

1 slack in the line. The line was tight. I came ahead on the
2 engines to slack the line. As soon as I let off the current,
3 it pushed me perpendicular.

4 By this time, the guard rail was collapsing and
5 stuff. And I went into the ship, he threw the lines off. And
6 when he threw the line off, I was full astern. The boat came
7 into contact with the ship and we went full astern.

8 Well, when we went full astern, I looked back and the
9 guardrail, well it was coming up and down and sideways out of
10 the water. It fell, it came across the stern, the top of it
11 came up, it was all the front of it, the front portion, upper,
12 upper portion of the guardrail or the west side of the pier was
13 pretty much under water, it was going under water. The back
14 side, just the top was sticking up. And it came up, it caught
15 on the side of the boat, the boat leaned over a little bit and
16 then it went under. And I was backing hard the whole time to
17 get away from it.

18 And the boat was at about a 45 degree angle, facing
19 the pier. And we backed away. I kept my wheels clear. I
20 backed away and went around the pier to get out of the way.
21 And then the ship, when it crushed the pier, it crushed all the
22 fendering. It hit the concrete. And we couldn't see
23 underneath. I mean, it was, there was so much wreckage up in
24 there, I couldn't see that. But we saw it hit when that chunk
25 came out of the bridge, the bow hit. And it hit and it

1 stopped. It completely stopped. It was like a dull impact.

2 And when the bow hit, I looked, I was backing away, I
3 saw the stern coming around and I knew I had to get clear all
4 of this, so the ship wouldn't come around and pin me to the
5 pier. I was moving the whole time. I wanted to make sure.

6 And it pretty much -- after that, I couldn't tell you
7 because I went around the pier and I was more concerned about
8 the boat and making sure everybody was okay. I mean, we stayed
9 with him as long as we could and I had to check, the boat.

10 I told the pilot, I don't know if he asked me first
11 or what. I told him, I have to check for damage, I have to
12 make sure everything on the boat's okay. And either before or
13 after, he asked me if everybody was okay, if the boat was okay,
14 and I said I don't know. We have to check everything out but I
15 think we are okay.

16 And the engineer did a check. He checked everywhere,
17 made sure we didn't have any holes in the boat or anything like
18 that, as best as he could. And when I determined that, you
19 know, everything was fine, that I wouldn't have to go beach it
20 or anything like that, I went to Capital Marine. We caught a
21 line and he then checked all the frontals, all the voids,
22 everything, make sure there was nothing leaking or anything.
23 We checked for damage.

24 And at least a couple of times, I called the pilot.
25 He called me once and I told him a couple of times, everything

1 was okay and if you need us for anything, you know, just let me
2 know. He said he was fine. So, we checked everything out. I
3 crossed the river, caught a line and within a few minutes, I
4 guess, I'm not really sure how long it was, he called, he said
5 he needed another tug to anchor the ship. By this time, he was
6 below the bridge.

7 Now, when I, one point I want to make is when I
8 determined the ship was going to hit the bridge, I was positive
9 we were clear. I knew we were going to clear the bridge. The
10 fendering part it, I mean, you know, it was just the impact,
11 and I mean you have 40 whatever draught of water. The water
12 was going crazy on there. But I was positive we were going to
13 miss the bridge. When I made the decision to get off, we were
14 going to miss, but I knew the ship was going to hit. But I
15 didn't want to endanger the boat. Because with no boat, you
16 know, it wasn't going to do him any good. But I waited. I was
17 sure of that before I let go of my line. But when I let go of
18 the line, I was of no more use to him. It was too late. It
19 was too late for him. It wasn't too late for me, it was too
20 late for him. That was, he was -- and that's pretty much it.

21 And we went back along side and they were having
22 trouble with the starboard anchor wasn't holding or something.
23 The ship kept going over toward the east bank. And I think
24 around that time, NOBRA 67 boarded and we worked it for at
25 least a couple of hours to get it re-anchored and situated and

1 stable. And that's pretty much it.

2 Q. Okay. So, when you were first out there, you made,
3 did you make contact with the pilot right away?

4 A. No, we didn't make contact -- well, he calls us.
5 When he was ready for us, he called us.

6 Q. Okay. Who decides which tug goes where?

7 A. The pilot.

8 Q. Okay. And was there any rhyme or reason to which tug
9 he puts where?

10 A. Well, I guess we were twin screw and we had the most
11 power so we were put on the starboard bow.

12 MR. VITT: Just for the record, we're talking about
13 NOBRA 38 (indiscernible).

14 MR. LARUE: Right. Back to --

15 BY MR. LARUE:

16 Q. Could you tell us a little bit more about the tug?
17 Actually, I should have done that earlier. Twin screw, what
18 horsepower?

19 A. I'm sorry.

20 Q. Your tug, what's the horsepower?

21 A. 3600. We had the most power of the three tugs.

22 Q. How big is the tug, how many feet long?

23 A. 97 by 30 something.

24 Q. Have you ever assisted a ship coming off the Apex
25 dock before?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How many times?

3 A. Maybe, I'll give 100 as an estimate and maybe as many
4 as 200 or as little as 75.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And I note also, Apex Oil has, the dock that he was
7 at, is a hard dock. It was called the upper general cargoes
8 dock is a fixed dock. Okay. It's now referred to as Apex Oil.

9 Immediately above it, there's a small dock, I think
10 which was originally, yes, that was originally for barges.
11 They used to put large ships in that dock and now they put them
12 at the hard dock. But, the, I've turned ships out of the upper
13 general cargoes and Apex. The upper general cargoes dock was a
14 general dock, it was paper ships (ph.), gear bulk ships and
15 whatnot. So we turn plenty of ships out of there, but we turn
16 out of the general cargoes dock. It would be significantly
17 less out of the old Apex dock.

18 But the dock we're talking about where the ship came
19 out of, I would say an estimate would be 100.

20 Q. Okay. In your experience, Captain, was the way you
21 went about maneuvering this vessel typical for that dock?

22 A. What do you mean?

23 Q. Other times when you've done it, did you take the
24 same approach or did you go upstream, did you go, which?

25 A. Ninety percent of the time we go below the bridge.

1 Five percent of the time, they go to the old ferry landing,
2 which would be, I'm not sure --

3 Q. Is that north of the bridge?

4 A. Yes, I'd say five percent of the time, they would go
5 to the old ferry landing or above and five percent of the time,
6 they'd go off of Exxon dock and turn around like it was coming
7 out of Exxon.

8 Q. When you said they would go below the bridge, could
9 you explain that?

10 A. The ship breasts off the dock and drops through the
11 bridge and turns. It will drop by -- dropping through, it
12 drops backwards with the current. Now, they don't always
13 completely clear the bridge. I mean, but once you're, they
14 start their turn, their wheelhouse and all is below the bridge.
15 I mean, that way, when they're coming through the bridge,
16 they're not even close to turning around. You know, they just,
17 they start turning as they are passing under the bridge. But
18 usually it's below.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. A very small percentage actually start turning, I'm
21 talking about the tip of the bow are mid-ship under the bridge.
22 By the time you start your turn, you're going to be well clear
23 of the bridge, below it. But most of them, the biggest ones go
24 all the way below the bridge. And I mean, immediately below
25 the bridge and turn to starboard.

1 Q. Okay. Is there a reason for that? I mean, was it
2 the stage of the river?

3 A. There's a bridge in the way. I still -- do you all
4 have the figures on how wide it is from the tip of the dock to
5 the fendering on the bridge? Does anyone know?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One thousand feet is what we
7 estimated it to be.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Actually, his pilot says
9 differently. But I've seen some say as wide as 500. I've seen
10 some as 750.

11 CAPTAIN LACOUR: Yes, we were scanning it last night.
12 I was looking at it and it was 500, I believe, just in the
13 general channel it is 500 but between the piers is very deep,
14 so they used the whole thing that. If it's 1,000 feet that
15 ship is 800 feet long.

16 BY MR. LARUE:

17 Q. Did you pre-brief with the pilot before you did this?
18 Did he tell you exactly what his intentions were --

19 A. No.

20 Q. -- for the turn?

21 A. No.

22 Q. How were communications with the pilot?

23 A. They were fine.

24 Q. Did you have any problems with it?

25 A. No problems.

1 Q. How did you communicate with the pilot?

2 A. It was VHF radio.

3 Q. What channel?

4 A. 77.

5 Q. So did the vessel move forward at all or it just came
6 straight out and began to turn?

7 A. Maneuvering it off the dock, he may have gone forward
8 a little bit. But he was still, regardless, he was still above
9 the bridge. But I don't think, by going forward I mean, --

10 Q. Going upriver, I mean.

11 A. No, he didn't go upriver. He turned down.

12 Q. Okay. Was there any reaction at all from the pilot
13 as this was going on and you were closer to the bridge?

14 A. No.

15 Q. No extra commands?

16 A. No.

17 Q. No getting excited?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. I just want to clarify exactly where the
20 position of your tug was and what you were doing as you were
21 getting closer to the bridge. Actually, before I say that,
22 when did you tie up to the vessel?

23 A. We started the job, it was the first order was given
24 at 7:05, so I would say between 6:45 and 7:00, the crew came
25 out and caught our line. And I can't say which line because

1 normally, we let go of ships in the stern to full astern. And
2 I couldn't see any of that going on, most of that going on
3 because the ship was pretty big. But normally, you let the
4 lines go and when he gave the first command, what they were
5 doing, I don't know. I mean, I don't know. I could hear the
6 linemen talking. Normally they drop springs, bearing springs
7 whatever, and the last line to let go is the headline.

8 Q. Captain, what was your first indication that
9 something was not right in the situation?

10 A. The bridge. The proximity to the bridge.

11 Q. And that was how long before you decided to --

12 A. By that you mean --

13 Q. -- get loose of the --

14 A. By that you mean, when did I, was I certain that
15 contact was evident, was going to happen?

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tell the whole story.

18 CAPTAIN LACOUR: When we started backing up.

19 BY MR. LARUE:

20 Q. You mean from the beginning of the maneuver? Could
21 you elaborate or tell us what you were thinking at that time?

22 A. The ship is 800 feet long. It's loaded down to 40
23 foot of draught. I mean, I'm not a pilot, but I wouldn't have
24 done it. I was 100 percent certain -- I can show you. That
25 was, now that was my belief. I just thought it was an

1 impossibility. I was pretty much certain. The ship turned, I
2 would say this is the center was somewhere in here, between
3 here and here, the stern of the ship, and we were in angle this
4 way.

5 Q. Before we do that, exactly where was she tied up?
6 Just for my clarification, since I wasn't --

7 A. The ship was tied up between here and here.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. It was tied up above, this is called a dog way here.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It was tied up above here.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. He breasted the ship out and he started turning. As
14 he came down, it would be more like this, and this. He started
15 turning and needless to say, the current is going to, is
16 pushing the ship down, but once you get like this, it's going
17 to get forward movement.

18 Now, I don't know how much room he had between them.
19 I have no idea. But it came here and when he got about here,
20 there's a buoy. When he passed the visible buoy, I mean I knew
21 his contact, it was imminent because he had a little forward
22 motion. I originally thought he may have just hit the fender,
23 because the fender is a ways out, but --

24 Q. Okay, great. So, it was around the time you got to
25 the buoy, you were 100 percent certain that you were going

1 to --

2 A. When we passed that buoy, yes. I figured he was
3 going to least take out the fender.

4 Q. Okay. Can you describe the, you have a little bit,
5 but I just want make sure I have it straight in my head. Can
6 you describe the order of impact that hit the fender? What hit
7 the fender first on the ship?

8 A. Well, the fender goes below the water.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. So, the point of the ship that's above its bow, I
11 don't know if it would be even with the axle point of the bow
12 or not, but the fendering, he had run the wall the up first,
13 and it started crushing back and from under water, I would say,
14 the bottom of the ship was pushing it. And as it came, it
15 caught it, and ship just kept coming and the fendering
16 disappeared on that side. Part of it fell on the boat, it went
17 under. That's when it hit. I didn't see it under water. In
18 fact, I couldn't see -- it was pretty much get the hell out of
19 Dodge. I mean, when we saw when the bow hit, the bow hit like
20 a starboard corner right off of the bow, a few feet below the
21 actual tip of the bow from the starboard side and hit. And
22 when the ship hit, it was like, it was boom, stop.

23 And then I didn't see anything after that. We were
24 getting out the way of the stern, to get clear.

25 Q. And you were no longer tied up, at that point?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Were you tied up?

3 A. No.

4 Q. When was the exact moment you let go?

5 A. When the fender was going down we were letting go of
6 the line. The guard struck.

7 Q. The wooden --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Now, did you call the pilot at any time during this
10 time?

11 A. I didn't have time.

12 Q. Was he giving, was the pilot giving you any commands,
13 Captain?

14 A. No. Now, I'm sure there was a mate or somebody on
15 the front of the ship so we could relay. And I mean, I
16 couldn't do it.

17 Q. Captain, --

18 A. The guys on the bow of the ship were hollering
19 (indiscernible). I remember that. When they got pretty close,
20 they took off.

21 Q. Captain, how long is line tying you to the vessel?

22 A. Between 75 and 100 feet.

23 Q. So how close would you say you actually are to the
24 vessel?

25 A. I'm sorry?

1 Q. How close are you actually to the vessel as you're
2 pulling?

3 A. I'm along side of him.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And when we were backing the ship down, the whole
6 time we were backing, the boats that tug up our, the port side
7 of the tugs were along side the ship, we were along side. And
8 never came off of it. When I was stopped the current quickly
9 pushed me perpendicular and I came ahead to give slack in the
10 line. And then it didn't take long. I went from full astern
11 to full ahead and we pushed into the ship, we threw the line
12 off and I was backing hard.

13 Q. So, you're actually right along side?

14 A. Yes. We're along side the bow, parallel with the
15 ship.

16 Q. Do you remember anything about the current, whether
17 it was unusual?

18 A. It was alive.

19 Q. Is all your experience on the river here?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And in what areas of the river?

22 A. Three are on Baton Rouge, but I'm not sure, you'd
23 have to look it up. I've been, in 25 years as a captain, most
24 of it was here in Baton Rouge.

25 Q. At least ten years on the Peggy H. here in Baton

1 Rouge, at least?

2 A. Yes, I've been on the Peggy H., the Catherine B. and
3 before that, the Samlbianc.

4 Q. I'm sorry?

5 A. Before I was on the Peggy H. you said ten years, and
6 before that, I was on the Catherine B. for a short amount of
7 time, and then before that, the Samlbianc.

8 Q. What vessel do you normally work on?

9 A. The Peggy H. These, this was years ago, when one of
10 those stays out, that's what I'm on.

11 Q. The weather on that day, do you remember anything
12 about the weather?

13 A. It was cold and sunny.

14 Q. All right.

15 MR. LARUE: I think I will pass off now.

16 BY CHIEF BALL:

17 Q. Okay, Captain. I'm going to ask you some questions
18 that are very similar. But I just want to make sure real
19 quick, okay. Just to make sure that it's clear. You've been a
20 captain for 25 years. Correct?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Let's see, you've been operating the last ten
23 years under your masters license, you've been working on the
24 Peggy H.?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Captain, were you well rested before you took
2 the sticks that day?

3 A. Oh, yes.

4 Q. Okay. Any physical problems?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. Any medications?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Do you wear glasses or contacts?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. All right. You said that you had one crew,
11 one deckhand up in the bridge with you?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. And the other deckhand and the engineer were
14 sleeping?

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Okay. Nobody else onboard?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. You said that the horsepower to your vessel is
19 about 3600?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. Let me see. The weather conditions. You say
22 it was cool or cold?

23 A. It was cold and clear.

24 Q. Cold. Until you to go to Baton Rouge, the water is
25 cold, huh?

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. Okay. Winds, were calm --

3 A. Yes

4 Q. -- rough -- okay. Current. If you had to guess,
5 what was the current of the river that day? I'm just looking
6 for your expertise not the science.

7 A. I'll tell you, one thing I can tell you, under the
8 bridge, the way the current come down at Apex and that center
9 pylon or pier or whatever. And it seems it's always seemed to
10 us it was magnified. So whatever the Corps of Engineers lists
11 the current, I would say it's a little bit more under the
12 bridge, because it's concentrated there. I don't know if that
13 makes any sense or not.

14 Q. Sure.

15 A. There's always been more current right there under
16 the bridge than below it.

17 Q. So what you're saying is that because of that pylon
18 right there, and with the current coming up strong, creates
19 like an eddy there that could --

20 A. Right immediately behind it.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But no, I think it just puts more water on that,
23 probably diverts more water to the channel side. And the dock
24 from the west bank diverts the water into the channel also.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. The reason I say that is because the tows will come
2 through, large tows, and I've seen tankers northbound, come up
3 have no problems and then when they'll get to the bridge,
4 they'll go around a little bit. And I've seen large tows with,
5 have 10,000 horsepower, and get right under the bridge and slow
6 down and have to go from side to side to pick a spot where it's
7 the least current to go through.

8 Q. Did you have any problems with your vessel, steering
9 wise?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Mechanically?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Nothing was different handling your vessel?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. You said that, would be you notice that as it
16 was getting close, it was go time to get out of there, release
17 the line, that's when you put the slack in your lines, did you
18 hit the general wall before or after you put the slack in your
19 lines? I know it's kind of milliseconds. I'm just wondering.

20 A. I think it was right about the same time.

21 Q. Okay. Navigation equipment working okay?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. All working good. Has the vessel had any repairs or
24 problems before this incident that you know of? Any recent
25 repairs? I'm not talking about like a year ago. Anything done

1 recently to it?

2 A. It was overhauled in the summer.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. The main engines were overhauled.

5 Q. Okay, so just overhauled. Now, Captain, you said
6 pretty much right until the time, you had an understanding of
7 what the pilot wanted to do, basically stop off. Did you state
8 anything to this pilot, okay, I don't think that's a good idea.
9 I know --

10 A. No, I did not. I'm not a pilot. I can't do that.

11 Q. I understand that. Did anybody else? Did any of
12 other tugboat captains mention to the pilot over the radio
13 like, hey I don't think that's a good idea? Did anybody?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I wasn't aware he was going to turn under the bridge
17 until he actually started turning and that's when I can't
18 believe --

19 Q. You were already into the operation?

20 A. Yes. I thought we were going to go below the bridge.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I was in disbelief. I mean that, I'm not saying I
23 knew for certain he was going to below bridge, I'm just saying
24 at that time that was my opinion. I mean, that would have been
25 my opinion.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. This is not going to happen.

3 Q. So whenever the vessel released off the docks,
4 whenever the vessel released off, it just released the lines
5 and came off, and whenever he ordered for you to start pulling,
6 the other two tugs to start pushing like this, he knew, that's
7 when the rest of you were like --

8 A. I was hoping it wasn't what he was going to do and
9 then I realized, when he told me to go back hard, and I think
10 he told the other tugs around that time to come ahead, start
11 pushing on the stern, I realized he was going to turn under the
12 bridge.

13 Q. In your experience, you stated that approximately
14 about 90 percent of the time, roughly, a vessel normally just
15 drops, go with the current, the tugs take them down and then
16 turn around (indiscernible). Five percent at least go up to
17 the old ferry landing?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Approximately how far is that? Do you know?

20 A. At least a half a mile.

21 Q. Okay. And then you said the other five percent go to
22 the Exxon, from here to the Exxon dock --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- and turn around.

25 A. It's rare that they do that now. In the past couple

1 of years, just about every one we've done has dropped below.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And you know, it's been a while since we've gone off
4 of Exxon, but some would go above.

5 Q. Okay. So, have you ever did an operation where
6 they've done this, turn off right from that dock, it's just the
7 way they did it, just came up there and just swung it?

8 A. I think we did one one time --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- during low river. We turned one one time.

11 Q. Okay. One time during low river?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. All right. Okay.

14 A. And it was a smaller ship, a gear bulk ship.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And when he came around, I don't know if you all
17 noticed on those piers, they had blue paint on the top
18 crosstie. He hit and rubbed it going around and the river
19 wasn't like this. It was a smaller ship, a gear bulk ship, a
20 cargo ship.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But that's been a lot of years ago.

23 Q. I understand. I understand. Okay, you stated after
24 he hit, the pilot contacted you and asked you if everybody was
25 okay?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay, so there were no injuries on your boat --

3 A. No.

4 Q. -- whatsoever? Okay. There was no compromise of
5 your vessel? No structural --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- damage? Okay. Did the pilot state anything else,
8 other than is everybody okay?

9 A. I don't remember.

10 Q. Okay. Other than hey, I need another tug to help me?

11 A. Well, that was later. Yes, he did, I think he called
12 us at least twice to see if everything was okay.

13 Q. Okay. Have you worked with this pilot before?

14 A. I'm sure I have. I --

15 Q. You don't recall?

16 A. -- there's a few, a hundred of them.

17 Q. Okay. I understand. But you're sure you have, but
18 you cannot recall, if you have worked with him?

19 A. Right offhand, no, I can't.

20 Q. I understand that.

21 A. And another thing is, I don't remember, I think he
22 took his Dad's number. He got a pilot's the last time, so I
23 think he took his Dad's number.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I've worked with his, I remember 38, his Dad, but I

1 don't know, he might have even been on his own watch. I
2 recorded in my logbook, but I'm more familiar with the pilots I
3 work with, I work with some more than others.

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. I'm not sure.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I've worked with his Dad a lot.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But I don't remember the last time or --

10 Q. I understand. No, I understand.

11 A. I mean, you know how it works.

12 Q. Yes, I'm just trying to see the, to be honest with
13 you, I was trying to see if working with this pilot stuck out
14 in your mind?

15 A. Oh, no.

16 Q. I was wondering if you just recall having worked with
17 this particular pilot.

18 Bill?

19 BY MR. WOODY:

20 Q. How would you rate the pilot? Was the pilot good,
21 poor, or --

22 A. I'm sorry?

23 Q. This pilot, was he a good pilot?

24 A. He was a pilot, I don't know.

25 Q. For instance, if different people thought the river

1 current was four miles an hour or four knots, would it come as
2 a surprise to you? Would that be in the ballpark?

3 MR. LARUE: I think he was asking you if you were
4 describe as possibly being torn off the current that day, would
5 that come as a surprise to you?

6 CAPTAIN LACOUR: No, it doesn't.

7 BY MR. WOODY:

8 Q. I'm sorry. I saw in the front, that's two questions.
9 You just did use the word current speed, does this even go in
10 knots? (Indiscernible) the current?

11 MR. LARUE: What is your best guess was the current
12 speed?

13 CAPTAIN LACOUR: I guess about four. I'm thinking in
14 the lower river when that (indiscernible) turns, you make about
15 nine point something knots going against the river, going
16 against the current, now we make it a little better than six.
17 So it would be about that, I guess. Somewhere in that
18 neighborhood.

19 BY MR. WOODY:

20 Q. I believe my questions that I had were answered. You
21 said that you were aware that the crew left the bow, or rather,
22 you were aware of it, was that before or after you had
23 (indiscernible)?

24 MR. LARUE: The folks on the bow of the Kition?

25 MR. WOODY: Yes.

1 MR. LARUE: You mentioned that you saw them run away.
2 Were you still tied up when that happened, or was that before?

3 CAPTAIN LACOUR: I can't guess, but it was -- I won't
4 guess, but it was right around all the same time.

5 BY MR. WOODY:

6 Q. Did you have to ask the pilot to get somebody to let
7 go of your line?

8 A. No. No. I announced on the radio on 77 that Peggy
9 was letting go the line. I may have used a little more
10 language, but it was pretty close to that. It might have had
11 one extra word in there, but I did say to the pilot, the Peggy
12 H. is letting its line go now because I wasn't going to wait on
13 them to come to the side. And I believe it's about that time
14 when they took off running. We were going to let go our lines
15 ourselves anyway.

16 Q. Okay. Now, there was no pilot brief. Is there ever
17 a pilot brief on what the maneuver is going to be?

18 A. Yes. Yes, sometimes they'll tell us what they're
19 going to do ahead of time.

20 Q. At that pier, (indiscernible) coming off the pier?

21 A. What's that?

22 Q. At that pier, are they usually or seldom or often,
23 have they come (indiscernible) at that pier?

24 MR. LARUE: When they leave Apex, do they pre-brief?

25 CAPTAIN LACOUR: Yes, sometimes. I mean, and

1 sometimes I'll ask the pilot, are we going to drop below the
2 bridge, or you know, a different maneuver. For instance, where
3 they head up and anchor and naturally, they have to put the bow
4 into the current and we'll ask them, we'll leave it to them,
5 we'll ask them are you going to turn to starboard or port
6 because it might make a difference to the length of your line
7 or where you get at.

8 But it was standard procedures when we'd go there.
9 You know, you get a line on the starboard bow, left enough
10 slack so the boat will stay flat and you have enough, you don't
11 want your boat cocked, leave enough slack, but he never really
12 said what he was going to do.

13 MR. WOODY: My question was answered. I think all my
14 questions have been answered. Thank you, very much.

15 BY MR. LARUE:

16 Q. Okay, I've got a couple more. Do you frequently work
17 with vessels of this size?

18 A. Oh, yes.

19 Q. Okay. Could you just kind of take me through how it
20 would have been if you were just going to back her through or
21 back her down the river?

22 A. Sure.

23 Q. What the tug would have done?

24 A. Sure. Normally, the ship will either drop back, as
25 you know, this goes in.

1 Q. Uh-huh.

2 A. Okay? Sometimes the ship will just come straight
3 back. When they let go of the lines, a lot of times, they just
4 slid off, they could come straight back. And when it's clear,
5 they'll either come here, sometimes as far down as the Cargill,
6 but if it's coming down, and we'll shove on the starboard bow
7 and on the port quarter. Sometimes they'll put one on the port
8 bow to push. And the ship will come around. And when they
9 get, I mean when you turn somebody like this, I mean, by the
10 time you start turning, you're clear.

11 And then you come down, under most circumstances,
12 you'll have or two tugs on the stern, on the starboard stern,
13 and one on the starboard bow backing. The stern tugs will be
14 pushing and it will turn to the right and go on around.

15 Q. So you would still just have the one tug on the
16 bow --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- two tugs on the stern, --

19 A. Right.

20 Q. -- you just wait until longer, basically.

21 A. Right. I mean, just backing down. And occasionally,
22 they'll have a tug on the other bow. I mean, sometimes, they
23 usually use three tugs, but they might just keep one on the
24 stern, and put one on the port bow and one on the starboard
25 bow. The port bow will push, the starboard bow will back, and

1 the port stern will push, and it will come around.

2 There was a ship off to an anchor here, and there was
3 a ship in the berth here. Under the bridge here, I don't
4 remember. Because we came from here and I turned around and
5 looked. Basically, I swung the boat around right on the bow
6 where I wanted to land. It came and I got alongside right
7 here. So I couldn't really see behind it. I don't know if
8 there was anything down there or not.

9 But there was a ship at Cargill and there was one in
10 anchor below this buoy here. The Monsignor (ph.), the boat, an
11 American ship.

12 BY CHIEF BALL:

13 Q. Captain, when you mentioned that sometimes you would
14 drop down below the bridge, you said you have two tugs on the
15 starboard side of the stern. When you ordinarily have two tugs
16 when you're dropping down below the bridge, are both of them
17 tied up with lines, or is it just the bow?

18 A. Sometimes they are, sometimes they aren't. Most of
19 the time, it depends on the pilot. It's a pilot's preference.
20 Sometimes they do. Sometimes they don't.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. If you were getting a line on a stern on a turn, if
23 you don't have a line, normally, the stern of the ship has a
24 counter. Q. Okay.

25 A. So, if you had a line and, based on a chock

1 placement, if the chock is too far back, well, you have to get
2 the next chock up with a way further. If you don't have a
3 line, you can get much further back on the ship and give it
4 more leverage. That's why a lot of pilots choose not put a
5 line, but it's the pilot's preference. It's whatever they want
6 to do. We turn hundreds of ships at Exxon and we rarely ever,
7 ever put up a line on a stern.

8 Q. Really, okay.

9 BY MR. LARUE:

10 Q. How far, where is Exxon in relation to --

11 A. Exxon -- this is 229 point something. Exxon is 230.

12 Q. Four or five miles up? That far up?

13 CHIEF BALL: Here's Apex. Here's Exxon right here.

14 MR. LARUE: 232. Okay.

15 CHIEF BALL: So roughly, say about two miles.

16 MR. LARUE: Okay.

17 CHIEF BALL: Two. Exxon's two miles, almost three
18 miles from the I-10 Bridge.

19 MR. WOODY: (Indiscernible).

20 CHIEF BALL: The ferry turnaround, I believe the
21 Captain said, -- Captain, you said the old ferry maybe is about
22 a half mile from the bridge?

23 CAPTAIN LACOUR: Yes, this is the old ferry landing.

24 CHIEF BALL: Okay.

25 CAPTAIN LACOUR: This (indiscernible) right here.

1 (Simultaneous conversation.)

2 CHIEF BALL: So Apex is one mile north of the bridge
3 and Exxon is about two and a half, almost three.

4 BY MR. LARUE:

5 Q. Is it easier to turn around up at Exxon? Is that the
6 reason that they would go that far up?

7 A. Basically, when a ship will go up to Exxon, it's
8 usually in like a low river condition, the channel follows
9 here, right up and goes here, more or less towards the west
10 bank, it will come up and there's a lot of water here, very
11 deep, so they don't have to worry about anything.

12 Whereas, at the bridge, the whole width of the bridge
13 and all piers, so this is an anchorage, and this is all deep
14 below. And the reason they'll turn here sometimes, they can
15 turn it shallow and they keep it tight. From the center here,
16 if you would make an imaginary line, you have enough water
17 here, you know you have enough water from here to here, when
18 not when it's too low, but they turn a lot of ships out of
19 Exxon because they know they won't have any problems.

20 That's one thing. That's why they go up there. But
21 it's not very often they do that. And it's not very often they
22 turn them here anymore because it was mostly gear bulk ships.
23 But we have taken some from this old dock here, come here and
24 turn. You have plenty of room to turn and get stabled off
25 before you go through the bridge.

1 BY CHIEF BALL:

2 Q. Do you normally have issues with low water whenever
3 you go below the bridge? I know that you said about 90 percent
4 of the time.

5 A. Yes, well, when it's low, they'll start turning here.
6 When they get in this area here, there's a lot water. This is
7 your main channel, okay? And your main channel, you have a lot
8 of water all the way up to here because this is the anchorage
9 and the channel actually comes this way. So, turning here,
10 you'll stay in deep water the whole time turning around in the
11 locks, from the locks on in shallow. But there is an
12 anchorage, a lower anchorage, from here, you know, just, I
13 guess, (indiscernible). There's a lot of water, it comes like
14 this, and then it winds out.

15 Ships you could come in from an anchor, a deep
16 draught ship, in an emergency, here or here. But you have a
17 lot of water here and it's very wide. And when they're
18 turning, they can turn and just go -- as they're turning,
19 they'll turn around and they can go right in the channel.

20 BY MR. LARUE:

21 Q. Captain, how often are the ships anchored just south
22 of the bridge there at the anchorages?

23 A. The anchorages below the view, often. Very often.

24 Q. And that doesn't really have any affect on whether or
25 not they want to start there? There's plenty of room?

1 A. Well, it makes it a little tighter, but it's done
2 there all the time.

3 Q. But it's not a bridge?

4 A. What?

5 Q. Nothing.

6 A. It's not a bridge. But yes, we've turned plenty
7 there. But I mean, if it would be an issue if it all was
8 filled up and anybody was having a problem.

9 CHIEF BALL: And also those vessels moored there
10 would be sort of away from the west bank as well, compared to
11 the center span on the (indiscernible).

12 BY MR. WOODY:

13 Q. And that buoy above the pier, what's the purpose of
14 that buoy?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. What's the purpose of that buoy?

17 A. I'm sorry?

18 Q. What's the purpose of that buoy?

19 A. When you're southbound, it will pick up the piers in
20 the fog so you'll know where the piers are at in the fall.

21 Q. I see.

22 A. Now, that's what I thought.

23 PETTY OFFICER FEUS: We have radar if that buoy is
24 designed, it's squares on it in every direction, so a radar
25 beacon can do down and hit from that square and knocks it back.

1 And a lot of times (indiscernible) you pick up all that.

2 CAPTAIN LACOUR: And before you get to it, the bridge
3 will show a straight line on your radar, but it won't show
4 what's underneath. It won't show the individual pier. And a
5 buoy marks the pier.

6 MR. LARUE: Anymore questions, anybody?

7 MR. VITT: I do.

8 BY MR. VITT:

9 Q. Captain, what's the policy with regard to pilot's
10 orders?

11 A. I'm sorry?

12 Q. What's the policy with regard to pilot's orders?
13 What do you do when you hear them?

14 A. Well that's what we -- we've got to do the pilot's
15 orders.

16 Q. Do you repeat back the orders before --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- you execute? Every time?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Did the pilot give you any orders that you did not
21 execute?

22 A. No.

23 Q. You mentioned earlier that your deckhand was in the
24 pilothouse wearing his gear. What gear are you referring to?

25 A. Well a hard hat and life jacket.

1 Q. His personal protective equipment?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. Before you let the line go, you did announce that you
4 were letting go?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. On 77 to the pilot?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. At that time, when you did that maneuver, when you
9 were actually letting the line go, had the ship contacted, at
10 that time? Was it simultaneous with the contact?

11 A. It was pretty -- it was imminent it was going to hit
12 and we were letting go.

13 Q. But the only time you maneuvered without a pilot's
14 order was to do what?

15 A. To keep my tug safe and my crew safe.

16 MR. VITT: That's all the questions I have.

17 BY MR. WOODY:

18 Q. Captain, you mentioned that (indiscernible) and made
19 it rock. Was there any -- what kind of evidence of the contact
20 was on your boat?

21 A. There was a little bit of damage. Some wood -- I saw
22 the pier hit. It came down on the side of us and the top. It
23 caught one of the starboard stern port a bit, it came down on
24 it, and then we have a rubber guardrail around and it rubbed on
25 it. And it took some cuts in it. There nothing, just surface

1 scratches, deep scratches and that's it. They pulled it down a
2 little bit, but it came back up. It just, it moved it around a
3 little bit, but that's it. It just is a lot of weight came
4 down on it. And the boat leaned over a little and then when I
5 came ahead into the ship, when I stopped, the boat came
6 perpendicular with the ship and needless to say, we were
7 sliding over. Because of the wrecking and everything, of
8 course was forward.

9 But the bridge pier was off my starboard quarter, it
10 was coming down, sinking, whatever. It was coming down. And I
11 leaned on the starboard rudder, to keep the stern clear, so I
12 could back out. And I was full ahead and then I went full
13 astern. But my wheels never made contact with anything.

14 Q. Could you draw us a sketch of this situation of which
15 you just described, showing a picture of this pier, the ship,
16 and your boat in reference to the ship? Just a little sketch.

17 CAPTAIN LACOUR: You want a picture of when he hit?

18 MR. WOODY: Yes, when it, at the time he hit.

19 MR. LARUE: Are you asking for a sketch?

20 MR. WOODY: Yes.

21 CAPTAIN LACOUR: You want to know when the ship made
22 contact?

23 MR. WOODY: Yes.

24 MR. LARUE: Draw a picture --

25 CHIEF BALL: Where was your vessel in respect to the

1 ship? How afar away were you from the center of the stanches.

2 You don't have to draw it to scale. Just give us a visual.

3 MR. VITT: While he's drawing it, I have one more
4 question.

5 BY MR. VITT:

6 Q. Were there any equipment or radio communications
7 failures on the vessel?

8 A. Were --

9 Q. On your tug.

10 A. Were any damaged?

11 Q. No. During the evolution of the undocking, were
12 there any engine or equipment failures or radio communication
13 failures?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Everything worked properly?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You followed all the pilot's commands?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Captain, is there any time you can question the
20 command of a pilot or flat out disobey it?

21 A. Well, yes, if the safety of your boat is question,
22 yes, of course. But then, sometimes your situation might be
23 quick and you know, sometimes they well, I don't want to do
24 that, I don't think that's safe.

25 Q. Safe for your tug?

1 A. Right. You know, I don't think I should do this.
2 And you know, you have different reactions. You know, but
3 usually if you feel something, a lot of, a very common
4 responses by pilots is, you know, keep your tug safe. Do
5 whatever you think, whatever you think to keep your tug safe.
6 That's the usually the response we get.

7 MR. WOODY: Well, I would suggest that the Captain
8 kind a draw a picture of the fendering system.

9 CAPTAIN LACOUR: Okay.

10 MR. WOODY: When you put the boat along side, or
11 where as close to where the contact, and sketch in the ship.
12 Now, he put the bridge in --

13 CAPTAIN LACOUR: Sure, I understand.

14 MR. VITT: Hopefully, your artistic ability is better
15 than mine. I'm at about stick figure level.

16 CAPTAIN LACOUR: The fendering system is a very low,
17 I-beam frame with creosote timbers on it. I'm going to show
18 above the bow. I can't -- below the bow, I don't know because
19 I didn't see it, the bottom of the ship. How it came down
20 here, the tug was along side right here. And about this time,
21 I can't tell you the exact angle, but as the ship made contact
22 here, we were still along side before it made contact.

23 As it made contact, I stopped. I need another
24 picture. These were the actual legs that were above the
25 bridge. When the ship got to this point here, we let go of our

1 line, and the tug immediately came around and we were at an
2 angle about like this into the ship, that's when I threw the
3 line, threw the line off, and the ship kept coming down, and
4 this, from pretty much a center line on this side, this part of
5 the pier, the guard, rather, was nonexistent and I think part
6 of it was sticking out here. The ship was here and we were
7 here, and the guard was sticking up, I had, the tug was much
8 longer and the guard was on a turn and the ship was coming
9 down.

10 When it made contact with the concrete, we had
11 already let our line go. We went in -- when it touched this
12 fender, and basically that was maybe a half a minute before.
13 It was coming down, it had speed. We started and I told him,
14 that pilot I'm going to let go of the lines. When we started
15 letting go of the lines, he had already, it only took two
16 seconds to let the line go. The guy was standing about five
17 steps above, in front of the line. He went down about five or
18 six steps, he went to the port, which was ten feet away, we had
19 a slack, he pulled, let it go, and took off.

20 But I was here. All of this guard was caught on the
21 boot, part of the guard was on the boot, it slipped away. And
22 then the last thing I saw, the ship was like this. Well I'll
23 go ahead and completely passed up here. The flare of the bow
24 had made contact with the actual legs that hold up the bridge.
25 The bow hit this. I mean, this was the bottom, part of this

1 would be under water anyway. And the guard was nonexistent.
2 The guard was say, here. And we must have came down somewhere
3 around here, coming out, where the guard was or whatever,
4 because we were pretty close to the concrete by that time.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. So, as soon as it hit the first part of the guard up
7 there, it just kind of peeled off here. Is that what happened?

8 A. When it hit this guard around it, okay? It just
9 immediately started collapsing.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It wasn't -- I can't say it wasn't attached, because
12 the guard is almost broken perfectly here. But when it came
13 down, all of this just started smashing and breaking and
14 everything else.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. All right? And when it came down the ship,
17 naturally, the bow of the ship is made like this. If you look
18 at it straight dead ahead, it would be made like this. And if
19 you're in the bow looking at it, here are the anchors. Okay?

20 This part of the flare, right around here, right off
21 of the bow, the peak of the bow, hit this. And it appeared to
22 me like this and then it go up like that, more or less, and
23 then the bridge is on top, and the guard rail is here. Okay?
24 It came around and hit this quarter, it smashed it down.

25 And when the ship stopped and it made contact

1 somewhere up in here, on the actual foot of the, leg of the
2 bridge, but it hit and stopped. It didn't -- it may have slid
3 off, I don't know because I was looking astern to make sure all
4 this wasn't behind me, so I could get out of it, because I
5 figured the ship was going to swing around, the stern was going
6 to swing around this way and I didn't want to be between it.
7 But when it hit here, it stopped momentarily. And it stopped
8 and we were getting out.

9 BY MR. WOODY:

10 Q. Captain, this is, would be like a one, two three
11 sequence?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And this one here, does this tell a (indiscernible)
14 is that what you meant to draw?

15 A. I'm sorry?

16 Q. Is this what you meant to draw? Because I know --

17 A. Yes. This would be about when I let go here.

18 Q. You're showing your boat inside the line of the ship.

19 MR. VITT: It's a side view. It's looking at the
20 side like this and the tug is here.

21 MR. WOODY: Oh, okay.

22 MR. LARUE: Does anybody else have any other
23 questions while we're here?

24 BY CHIEF BALL:

25 Q. Captain, I don't know if you were able to see it, but

1 were you aware if the motor vessel cleared that buoy right
2 before the bridge?

3 A. Yes. You'd get to the buoy right before the bridge.

4 Q. The buoy up from, north of it, did you see if cleared
5 it or if he made contact with it?

6 A. I believe he cleared it.

7 Q. Okay. I know from your angle, it would be very
8 difficult.

9 A. I saw the buoy when it went past me, but I was maybe,
10 I'd have to -- I can't say. I can give you an approximate
11 distance. I might have been 60 or so feet from the actual tip
12 of the bow back.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Maybe a little more, maybe a little less. I think
15 probably a little more. And when we went by, the buoy went
16 ahead of me. It was way far ahead of me. But I would imagine
17 he cleared the buoy, but he was close.

18 CHIEF BALL: I have nothing else.

19 MR. WOODY: Just one more question. If you would put
20 your signature and date on that thing?

21 MR. VITT: What at the time of the --

22 MR. LARUE: We got the exact distance from pier to
23 the bridge, according to the chart, it's 1,350 feet.

24 CHIEF BALL: And then Mike, records show me right
25 here --

1 MR. VITT: That comes from the Corps of Engineers map
2 book which shows that its 500 feet channel wide. I am not
3 certain as to the depth of the channel. It may be that wide,
4 but it may not be that deep.

5 CHIEF BALL: Well, in a shipping lane, like how wide
6 is a shipping lane?

7 CAPTAIN LACOUR: I'll take an estimate. They had --
8 I'm thinking the actual ship lane it's 500 feet. But also, in
9 the clearance from here to here, there's a guard, and here the
10 dock extends past this.

11 CHIEF BALL: That is true.

12 MR. LARUE: Past the bridge.

13 CHIEF BALL: Yes, it does.

14 MR. LARUE: The pier sticks out at least a couple,
15 50, 60, 70 feet.

16 CAPTAIN LACOUR: You can see it here.

17 CHIEF BALL: All you've got to do is look at the
18 angle from here to there, and that's where it's angled from
19 here to there, that --

20 CAPTAIN LACOUR: There, this pier is here, so you
21 have to subtract this much dock. And it's black going around
22 (indiscernible) and you have to subtract out --

23 CHIEF BALL: So basically, instead of just saying
24 it's from here to here, it's actually from right here --

25 CAPTAIN LACOUR: Right.

1 CHIEF BALL: -- to here.

2 CAPTAIN LACOUR: When the engine is off --

3 (Simultaneous conversation.)

4 CHIEF BALL: I'd say it's 100 feet, minimal. And
5 that's --

6 MR. VITT: Yes. You also can't discount the air
7 draught of the ship.

8 CHIEF BALL: Sure.

9 MR. VITT: And so that narrows the channel somewhat.

10 CHIEF BALL: Well, as long as I can get the actual
11 depth at water and in the shipping lane as well, so we get a
12 better sense of the height. The ship is like 798 --

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Point two.

14 CHIEF BALL: Yes, 798.2. So --

15 MR. LARUE: Very good. Well, I don't think we have
16 any more questions. You're good. All right. Thank you very
17 much, Captain for coming in and talking to us today. We'll
18 just sign off here. If you could acknowledge that this is
19 being recorded?

20 CAPTAIN LACOUR: I'm being recorded.

21 MR. LARUE: All right. That will work.

22 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
23 matter was concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Motor Vessel Kition
 Allision With I-10 Bridge
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana
 February 10, 2007
 Interview of Roddy Lacour

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-07-FM-013

PLACE: Baton Rouge, Louisiana

DATE: February 12, 2007

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kimberly J. Zogby
Transcriber